



# PRESS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **FORMER JACKSONVILLE AND ORLANDO POLICE OFFICER SENTENCED**

### **TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR MURDER AND KIDNAPING**

Jacksonville, FL - U.S. District Court Judge Henry Lee Adams, Jr. today sentenced former Jacksonville Sheriff's officer Karl T. Waldon to 4 life terms and 121 years in prison for a crime spree that included the murder and robbery of Jacksonville businessman Sami Safar. Waldon, age 39, was charged in a 2000 indictment with various civil rights, illegal drugs, and obstruction of justice violations. Waldon was convicted by a jury in November 2002 for killing Mr. Safar and committing other federal violations. In all, the jury convicted him on 14 of 15 counts.

On January 20, 2003 five other co-conspirators, who pled guilty to a variety of crimes, were also sentenced by Judge Adams. The defendants include convicted co-conspirators Aric Sinclair, Jason Pough and Reginald Bones, former Jacksonville Sheriff's officers. Sinclair was sentenced to a total of 17 years and seven months in prison, 12 years of supervised release and was ordered to pay over \$108,000 in restitution to the victims of his crimes. Pough was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, three years of

supervised release and ordered to pay over \$500 in restitution to his victims. Bones was sentenced on bank fraud charges unrelated to the case and given three years of supervised release, 100 hours of community service and ordered to pay back \$11,000 in restitution to the bank fraud victims.

Civilian defendants Kenneth McLaughlin, James Swift, Jr., and Darryl Crowden, were participants in various crimes with the Jacksonville Sheriff's officers. McLaughlin, convicted of participating in the murder and kidnaping of Mr. Safar, was sentenced to 19 years and seven months in prison, five years of supervised release and ordered to pay over \$108,000 in restitution. Crowden, convicted of robbery and drug offenses, received four years and three months in prison, five years supervised release and ordered to pay \$50,000 in restitution to his victims. Swift is scheduled for sentencing on Feb. 4, 2003.

Sami Safar owned convenience stores that cashed checks for customers. Trial evidence showed that Sinclair worked as a security guard at a bank branch where Mr. Safar maintained accounts. Sinclair noted that the Mr. Safar made large cash withdrawals from the bank on Fridays.

On July 3, 1998, Karl T. Waldon, ordered his co-conspirators Swift and McLaughlin to act as lookouts in anticipation of Safar making a withdrawal from his bank. Once Waldon, who was in uniform and driving his marked police car, received the lookout call from his co-conspirators, he turned on his emergency lights and pulled over Safar. Waldon unlawfully took him into custody, handcuffing him and placing him in the back of the police car. The victim was then driven to an isolated location, where Swift and McLaughlin joined Waldon. Waldon strangled Mr. Safar with a rope, rendering him unconscious. Waldon then took the driver's seat and ordered McLaughlin into the back seat to make sure Safar

was dead. Waldon then ordered McLaughlin to dump the victim's body in a wooded area and Waldon stole \$51,000 in cash withdrawals from him.

"This heinous crime of conspiracy, greed and police misconduct took the life of a community businessman and undermined the honorable work of law enforcement personnel everywhere," said Ralph F. Boyd, Jr., Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "The Department will continue to prosecute the abuse of power by a small minority of law enforcement officers to ensure that the trust between law enforcement and communities remain strong."

First Assistant United States Attorney Jim Klindt, the lead prosecutor in the case, stated, "This case sent a chill through the Jacksonville community and initially put a dark cloud over law enforcement. Today these rogue officers are off the street and on their way to federal prison thanks to the fine work of other law enforcement officers who investigated the case. This effort helped to restore faith in those who serve and protect. It took some very hard work by good cops and agents to put away these bad cops."

The case was jointly prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida and Civil Rights and Criminal Divisions of the Department of Justice. The case was investigated by agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and detectives from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office.

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